



Desert Rose

Editor: Angela Dolder
March/April 2004

Proudly Serving The Families of 3/7



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Battalion Commander: Lt.Col Lopez
Executive Officer: Maj Henderson
Sergeant Major: SgtMaj Huff
FRO: 1st Lt Huerta
Key Volunteer Coordinators: Sally
Gannon & Mandi Roe
Key Volunteer Advisor: Lynn Lopez



Greetings from Al Qaim,

The Marines, Sailors and Soldiers of Task Force (TF) 3/7 are hard at work establishing security and bringing a better life to the people of Al Qaim. You can be very proud of our performance. We are actively engaged in establishing local governance, local Iraqi police forces, and improving schools.

Lima Company, supported by Marines from Weapons Company and detachments from throughout the TF, are responsible for overseeing the border check-point crossing with Syria and for the town of Husayba. They have built a forward operating base and will soon have many of the creature comforts, to include an Internet café, that will allow them to keep in better contact with loved ones.

Kilo Company and attachments are running the towns of Karabala (not to be confused with our last deployment to Karbala) and Sada. They have responsibility for a large portion of the main road that runs through our sector. Kilo is also working with supporting operations in Husayba.

India Company is providing security for the camp at Al Qaim, which is an old railway station and repair depot. India Company, along with our Military Police Platoon, has started the first and second class of the newly formed training academy for the Iraqi police force. They also have responsibility for managing and training the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC).

Weapons Company has responsibility for the town of Ubady and providing security throughout the TF's area. They have already executed school projects and a clean-up project in their area. Portions of Weapons Company are directly supporting the other companies in the TF.

As always the Marines and Sailors of H&S Company are hard at work supporting the efforts of the entire TF. They are meeting the challenge of running a small village of our own here at the Forward Operating Base Al Qaim.

Keep us in your prayers! We appreciate all the support we are getting from the home front. Lt Huerta and the Remain Behind Party are there to serve your needs.

God, Family, Country And Corps,

Lt Col M.A. Lopez

Dear 3/7 Family and Friends,

Task Force 3/7 successfully conducted the Transfer of Authority with the 1st Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Carson, Colorado on 11 March 2004. The Army provided us with a professional and well-coordinated turnover that will greatly help us conduct our operations in the Al Qaim area.

The Marines and Sailors of Task Force 3/7 are working hard to foster a good relationship with the people of the Al Qaim area. The Iraqi's in the area that I have spoken to are very happy that we are here providing security for their families.

Everyone has been working hard to improve the security and living conditions at Forward Operating Base Al Qaim. We are much larger than the Army unit that we replaced so we continue to make day-to-day improvements. We have found many Marines and Sailors who have carpentry, electrical and plumbing skills and those skills have been put to good use.

We are very thankful that you continue to keep the home fire burning while we are away. What you are doing at home is greatly appreciated.

Please continue to keep us in your prayers.

SgtMaj Huff
3d Battalion, 7th Marines
"The Cutting Edge"



CHAPLAIN'S CHAT

It is said that, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." I can tell you from personal experience this is indeed true. Before last year's deployment for OIF 1, I would have told you that after almost 25 years of marriage my wife and I were as much in love as I thought possible. I was wrong. After 8 months apart last year, and now apart again for OIF 2, I can tell you that our love is growing ever richer and deeper.

The Song of Solomon, the Bible's marriage song, says, "For love is as strong as death ... many waters cannot quench love, nor will rivers overflow it; if a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, it would be utterly despised" (6:6-7). There are two obvious points taught here about love.

First, genuine love is unbreakable. The promise to "love, honor and cherish until death do us part" requires the strength of character and commitment to let nothing stand in the way or come between our marriage. This is not easy! None of us are always a joy to be around and deployments mean we cannot always be around; so love may bend a bit under those strains from time to time but it never breaks. Even a flood of troubles cannot quench the fires of love because true love is not about what we can get from one another but how much of ourselves we can give. This is, in fact, the nature of God's love. God's love for us is never about what He gets out of it but what He gave us. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (Jn.3:16). It is this kind of love that makes for a happy and lasting marriage.

Second, love cannot be bought. It cannot be bought with money. It cannot be bought with sex. It cannot be bought with the offer of security, companionship or even the desire to have children. Marriage based upon such "love" will end up "utterly despised." Why? Because it is a "love" that constantly expects to get something in return for everything it gives. No wonder so many marriages fail. They are based upon a "love" that is bought rather than a love that is given.

What will this deployment teach you about how you love? If it deepens and strengthens your marriage you probably both have a love for the other that delights to constantly give. If it is ruining your marriage perhaps you have bought your "love" and/or expect it to be bought.

I encourage you to commit to a love that gives and expects nothing in return. It is the difference between a love so strong it cannot be quenched and one that will end up "utterly despised." My wife and I have chosen God's giving kind of love and it has made all the difference!



Lt. Dave Slater

If by Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream-and not make dreams your master;
If you can think-and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop to build'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings-nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much:
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And, which is more-you'll be a Man, my son!

COMPANY MESSAGE BOARDS

H & S

After a lengthy flight with a brief stop over in Prague, Czechoslovakia, Operation Iraqi Freedom II started off as most of the Marines and sailors of H&S Company expected it to: windy and dusty. The majority of H&S Company was on the battalion's first flight into Kuwait. The day after arriving at Camp Udairi, Kuwait, we found ourselves in a mild sandstorm. Luckily, the chow provided for us was enough to get our minds off the weather conditions. Camp Udairi had the necessary amenities to make the wait for the battalion's movement into Iraq a bearable one. A gym and stretch of road were available for daily physical training. Phone centers and an Internet café were available, movies were being run constantly in a MWR tent, and there was a Subway shop and Burger King trailer.

After about two weeks in Camp Udairi, the battalion finally made it's way to its new home a short distance from the Syrian border. Life at this little base has been better than anticipated. The first week had many of the Marines and sailors living wherever we could find extra space, but after the Army unit we were relieving left, all but 15 Marines were able to move into permanent billeting in buildings. Our battalion's cots have still not arrived and the Army unit did not have enough to turn over to us, so some individuals are still roughing it by living on the ground. Still, we have roofs over our heads and are protected from the elements. It has rained a couple of times in the past few weeks. It has not begun

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3/7 Marines in Iraq (left)

Iraqi children (right)

INDIA

Hello to all of our family back in the states! India company arrived in our area of operations with *relatively* few incidents. LCpl Matthews and PFC Pollard both sustained broken legs in separate training accidents while we were in Kuwait. The company feels their absence and we wish them a speedy recovery. Apart from that, our trip up from Camp Udairi was uneventful.

Our turn over with the Army unit here has been an important and extremely professional evolution. Our Marines are now poised and ready to assume the mission that these brave soldiers have performed so well over the past 12 months.

The company's new "home" is no Holiday Inn, but it is undoubtedly better than any of us ever expected. With electricity and a water source available to us, we really have little to complain about with regards to our living conditions.

The support from you all has begun to pour in and we are certainly appreciative of every bit of it. We will do our best to return that support to you via email, phone calls and snail mail, but as you all know connectivity is sometimes hit and miss, the mail is slow and your Marines are busy, so please bear with us.

We have had many Marines promoted to both Corporal and Lance Corporal since the last newsletter. Our Marines continue to grow and

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expand their professional knowledge and expertise on a daily basis. If your husband was one of the newly promoted Marines, congratulations to the both of you, his promotion is well deserved.

Our company did have one couple that took the plunge prior to our deployment. Cpl Maynard and Misty were married on February 2. Congratulations to the both of you and for what it is worth, I have heard that a belated honeymoon is the way to go anyways!

Again let me take the time to thank each and every one of you for your support and devotion to your husband and to our company team. You all are vital to our success and every sacrifice and contribution you make is appreciated more than you will ever know. You really are the strength of this company. Take care and may God bless you all.

B.W. TIPPETT



Lance Cpl. Justin Dodd teaches an Iraqi recruit to fire an AK-47 at the Al Qaim Police Academy on Wednesday. U.S. troops have been trying to train Iraqi police and a newly formed militia for months.

Andrew Cutraro/P-D

KILO

Greetings from Al Qā'im to the Kilo Family,

The Marines of Kilo Company have landed and the situation is well in hand. Having arrived from Kuwait in early March, your Marines have simultaneously conducted a transfer of authority with the 1st Battalion of the 3rd U.S. Cavalry and established a strong presence in our sector of Al Qā'im – the towns of Karabila and Sadah on the south bank of the Euphrates.

From our very first day here, the Marines of Kilo have distinguished themselves. Of particular note, 2ndLt Jason Johnston (2nd Platoon Commander), SSgt Shelby Lasater (CAAT White Platoon Sergeant), Corporal Justin Kidder (CAAT White), and Lance Corporal Edwin Hoffman (2nd Squad, 2nd Platoon) were instrumental in treating a 10-year old Iraqi boy with first aid just minutes after he had fallen victim to an explosion that was undoubtedly intended for Coalition Forces. These Marines' quick actions and compassionate care of this boy helped save his life, and he is recovering from the experience.

As you might have already heard, Task Force 3/7 has already sustained two casualties, and all Marines of Kilo Company and CAAT White extend their utmost regrets and sincerest condolences to the families of Privates First Class Brandon C. Smith and Ricky A. Morris. I am proud to report, though, that the Marines of Kilo and CAAT White have been quite successful in preempting attacks on our forces by capturing enemy personnel for the past four days straight since the loss of PFCs Smith and Morris.

In addition to hunting down those who would do us harm, your Marines are active every day in showing a positive American presence to all the

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to get hot yet, but that won't be the case in the near future and we will be working hard to make sure all living and working spaces have air conditioning. We have our own base phone center and Internet café that have been fairly reliable thus far. We hope to have a constant signal of Armed Forces Network Television in the near future for some of the televisions that were left behind by the Army.

As always, H&S Company is strung out and working in a hundred different directions. About 30 Marines from all of the sections have been compiled into a provisional rifle platoon, led by Sergeants Rodney Mack and Brent Houston, and attached to India Company to help in the security of our base. Many of the Marines in H&S Company will find themselves serving in that platoon before this deployment is completed. All of the Marines and sailors have really worked extremely hard and accomplished some great things in the first month. Sergeant Brian Crookston's section of Gun Trucks has been busy providing security escorts for the Battalion Commander and logistic convoys. Staff Sergeant Adrian Walker and his merry band of stand out cooks have done an incredible job of providing great and plentiful chow with the various resources given to them. Corporal Bryon Keilman joined the battalion just a month before deploying and has been a key element to the success of our cooks. The Communication Platoon Marines do not have a hard time falling asleep if they ever given a chance. They have been working around the clock to give the battalion Internet, e-mail, radio, and telephone services so that we can communicate with the other units in our area and back home. Staff Sergeant Matthew Dunnville and Lance Corporals Mark Fulkerson, Raymond George, and Jason Larpenteur have been critical to their success thus far. The Battalion Aid Station's corpsman have quickly settled into their new home and made a new friend at the same time. They have adopted a little dog named Carlos that had been living among the Army unit that we replaced.

Congratulations go out to some newly promoted Marines. Lance Corporal Akram Fallah's previous promotion to Lance Corporal was backdated to October 2, 2003 to give him a meritorious promotion to that rank. Brian Bull and Joshua Burbank were promoted to Private First Class on February 1st and Gabriel Antunez was promoted to Corporal on the same date. March 1st saw a number of promotions. Matthew Laughlin, Raymond Rawls, and Keith Naillon were promoted to Lance Corporal. Keith Boulanger, Thomas Howell, and Lucas Ellison were promoted to Corporal and Matthew Potts was promoted to Sergeant. Another meritorious promotion was given to Scott Thode on March 2nd for promotion to Corporal. I'd like to also congratulate Corporal James Longtin. Corporal Longtin received a Certificate of Commendation for his exceptional performance during battalion level training at March Air Reserve Base in early January.

I look forward to reporting many other great deeds by the Marines and sailors of H&S Company. The mission will not be accomplished until every last one of us has returned home. As always, letters and packages from our loved ones greatly help to keep things going and to keep morale up. To this point we have received mail about once a week. By early April, we anticipate having a fully manned post office that will have mail arriving and leaving every two or three days. In the next newsletter, I will give more insight into the base facilities and services as well as the other units that are living here with us. You are all in our daily thoughts and we greatly appreciate the support we are receiving from the home front. Thanks and Semper Fidelis!

Sincerely,
Barron E. Mills
Capt USMC



Tracers from Cobra attack helicopters strike an insurgent position during the battle for the city of Husaybah on April 17th.
(Andrew Cutraro/P-D)

LIMA

Family, friends, and supporters:

After completing our compressed training regimen in January, Team Lima shifted our focus to preparation for our return to Iraq. The last few weeks we spent with family and friends are already lasting memories, and will remain with us throughout our deployed time.

On 13 February, the first members of the company deployed to Kuwait in order to prepare for our arrival. On 16 February, the remainder of the company left 29 Palms and made our way to another desert on the other side of the world. After nearly two weeks of preparation, the company traveled north to Iraq and jumped headstrong into the operation on 5 March. Over the following week, we moved our combat power to a company operations base near the Iraq-Syrian border and on 12 March again started patrolling the streets of an Iraqi city. Following a brief turnover with U. S. Army forces, Team Lima again assumed responsibility for ensuring the security and well-being of the Iraqi population. Joining the company for this operation are the 1st and 2nd Platoons of Company K, the Scout/Sniper Platoon, and the CAAT Red Platoon from Weapons Company. Not only have these units made our capabilities more robust, but they have added a new colorful dimension to our unit personality. After only a few days in control of the area, our Marines are already aggressively operating on the ground and producing results beyond expectation. For the foreseeable future, we will continue to hit the streets hard and continue building a top-notch base of operations.

There have been numerous individual accomplishments during the period for Team Lima. Sgt Soudan was promoted meritoriously on 2 February after sweeping the competition at the regimental level. On 1 March, Cpls Barrs and Blair; and LCpls Johnson, Osorio, and Nims were promoted to their current rank. On 2 March, Cpl Swaney and LCpl Ruckel were promoted meritoriously to their current ranks. Also during the period, Cpl Milinkovic and LCpl Bilderback were awarded the *Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal* for outstanding performance as small unit leaders during the pre-deployment workup. HM3 Purviance was awarded the *Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (with combat distinguishing device)* for valorous performance during combat operations. Team Lima also welcomed numerous new members during the period. LCpl Whittier was married on 4 January and LCpl Lugo was married on 4 February. Additionally, we welcomed forty new Marines to the unit just prior to deployment.

In closing, I want to thank you ahead of time for all your much needed support during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM II. The next few months will be a trying and challenging period for us, and your constant thoughts and prayers will provide the motivation we need to succeed. Know that you are in our minds daily and that we appreciate everything you do.

R. J. GANNON



Marines from Lima Co., begin a foot patrol through the besieged city of Husaybah, Iraq Sunday morning.
(Andrew Cutraro/P-D)



Marines from Lima Company of the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, walk past the helmet and boots of Lance Cpl. Christopher Wasser on Monday in Husaybah, Iraq. Wasser was killed Thursday by a roadside bomb.
(Andrew Cutraro/P-D)



Marines in a convoy security team keep their weapons trained on ridgelines to guard against an ambush of their supply convoy, which was bound for Camp Al Qaim.
(Andrew Cutraro/P-D)



Contacts

KV Coordinators: Mandi Roe-

KV Advisor: Lynn Lopez

H&S: Sheila Blazer-

India: Betty McIver-
& Kamey Tippet-

Kilo: Sabrina Salcido-

Lima: (Temporary)
Amber Jaramillo
& Lara Palmer

Weapons: Faith Longoria-

Please call between the hours of 8 a.m.— 9 p.m.

Thank you!

"A War Within Memories"

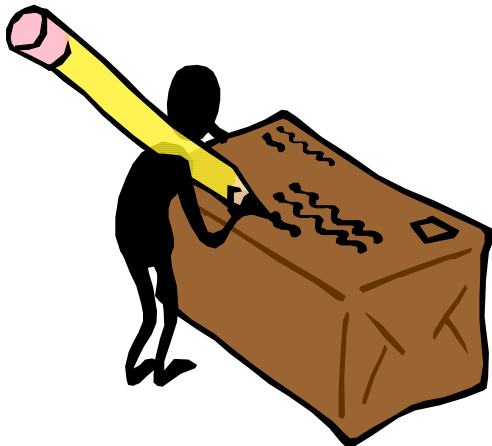
I wish for the war to end because it's filled with hate and turmoil. If my family comes home safe that would make my world a better place. To hear of death to the soldiers that are over in Iraq makes my stomach cringe, but I tell myself to relax. If all of the people of this world would unite, then we would have to worry about the knocks on the door or the three A.M. telephone calls at our home. A house is not a home with out or soldiers, even if he is only my uncle. The porch will be lonely until he returns and my heart will be split until he is here once more hugging me tight saying "You know your my favorite niece right?!" When I know that I'm his only niece.

Arkeisha Pace, 14
Columbus, GA
Niece of HM1 William Pace III

Preparing Packages

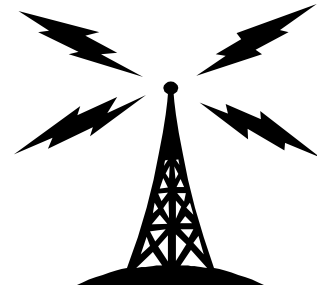
Packages from home are very special to our deployed Marines. Here is the proper protocol for preparing those packages from the United States Postal Service.

- Choose a box with enough room for cushioning material around the contents. Cardboard works best however old alcohol or cigarette boxes cannot be shipped.
- Print the delivery address parallel to the longest side of the packages with a pen or permanent marker so that the address is legible from an arm's length away. Print the return address in the upper left corner on the same side of the packages as the delivery address.
- Tape the opening of your box and reinforce all seams with clear, 2" wide tape. Do not use duct tape.
- Place a strip of clear packaging tape over your label to prevent the address from smearing.



- Placing an extra address label with the delivery and return addresses inside the packages will ensure it will be delivered in case the outside labels are damaged or fall off.
- Packages heavier than 70 pounds cannot be mailed.

Care Packages Mailing
Days at the MCX: May 13,
June 17, July 15



Alert!

If your loved one is seriously injured you will be notified in by the Family Readiness Officer (FRO) within 24 hours of him receiving the information. Don't believe the so-called "prank" phone calls that anything has happened to your Marine or Sailor. Report such activity to your local police department immediately. Trust only what you hear from your Key Volunteer, the FRO, or from your loved one himself.

citizens of Karabila and Sadah, and helping to improve both their way of life and their safety.

I would also like to recognize the Marines of 1st and 4th Platoons for their tireless work in support of our sister company, Lima, in the town of Husaybah and at the border checkpoint with Syria. Their operational tempo for the past two weeks has been extremely high, and the Lima Company Commander has repeatedly expressed his gratitude for their performance.

Next, congratulations to Alfonso Sifuentes (4th Plt) for his meritorious promotion to the rank of Corporal and Jason Reichel (4th Plt), Michael Torres (3rd Plt) and Travis Peaco (2nd Plt) who were all meritoriously promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal. Also, I would like to congratulate 1st Sgt Michael Templeton and his wife, Teri, on the occasion of their upcoming wedding anniversary on 09 April. Teri, as a Marine wife for the past 19 years, you epitomize the motto *Semper Fidelis*.

The men of Kilo love and miss all of you at home, and sincerely appreciate your support. Keep the letters and the care packages coming – as these are our only tangible links to home. Understand that your Marines are making a difference – a difference in the everyday lives of people who had lived for too many years under an oppressive regime, and a difference for the children of a battered country. Their separation from you is having a positive impact on the lives of many people whom you will never meet, but who will undoubtedly benefit, for many years to come, from your sacrifice. Thank you for your unconditional support, and *Semper Fi*.

- Captain Trent A. Gibson
Commanding Officer
Kilo Company

Dear Family and Friends:

I would like to first let everyone involved with the Key Volunteer Network and all the other friends and supporters of the Marines of Weapons Company, know what an honor it is to be a part of such a distinguished group of Marines and sailors. We have been quite busy with everything from embarkation issues, training and deploying back to Iraq. I hope that you all were able to spend some quality time with your loved ones during the Christmas holiday and do any catching up that you needed to. Weapons Company has done a superb job of handling all of the challenges that have been presented to us and we certainly could not have done it without your support. Thank you once again for being there for us!

For those of you who don't know, our Company played a crucial role in the battalion's success during our first deployment to Iraq. We had several demanding tasks that needed to be accomplished in order for our peacekeeping mission to be successful. Our Heavy Guns Platoon found itself in Muhamidiya in support of Task Force Scorpion, an effort led by the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division to combat the activities of Former Regime Loyalists operating in an area about 15 kilometers south of Baghdad. "Heavy Guns" conducted a significant number of raids on key personnel as well as search and seizures of numerous weapons cache sites. Their primary mission was achieved with great success after providing ironclad security along route "Sue", the main road from Baghdad to south-central Iraq. Meanwhile, the remaining elements of Weapons Company continued to do great things in the holy city of Karbala and its surrounding areas. Our Anti-Armor platoon worked tirelessly to assess and address the security needs of local communities and provide escorts of food and oil convoys moving throughout our "Area of Operations". Our 81mm Platoon reinforced these efforts and also provided mobile support to the rest of the Battalion any-

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where in the city and at any time. I am happy to report that our efforts reaped great rewards; very little enemy resistance was detected or reported in our area and the civilian populace felt relieved and blessed to have us supporting them. Semper Fi!

After saying an emotional goodbye to the good people of Karbala and Muhamidiya, Weapons Company returned home back to their loving families and friends. Since our return, over 50 of our brothers have ended their proud years of service or have moved on to other assignments in the Corps. I ask that you all pray for their safety and success in the coming times; they are truly exceptional Marines. Many of our Marines are continuing to do great things back home with us. Recent promotions include Cpl Dale, LCpl Xiong, Cpl Sagranichne, LCpl Forner, who were promoted to their current ranks and a re-enlistment by Cpl Longoria. LCpl Self and HN Cook both received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with Combat "V" while Sgt Good and Sgt Guffey received the Navy and Marine Corps achievement medal. Let's all wish Sgt Guffey the best of luck as he heads to Parris Island for Drill Instructor School. LCpl Jackmovich recently won the Meritorious Corporals Board and SSgt Laucht and Corporal Valerio have both returned from attending Staff NCO Career Course and Corporals Course, respectively. Finally, Pfc Doyle, Pfc Walker, Cpl Cervantes and Cpl Helker received Purple Hearts for wounds received in a combat environment. Weapons Company would like to wish Pfc Dole a very speedy recovery and we look forward to having him back with us in the near future. We would like to give a warm welcome to GySgt Holland, SSgt Lassater, Sgt Harnett, Sgt Cole, Sgt Northrup 1st Sgt Martin and their families to "our" family.

Our beloved 1st Sgt Humphries, who was recently selected to Sergeant Major, will be moving on to greener pastures. He will be heading to I and I duty at Fort Lewis, Washington and we all know he will do a super job up there. WE WILL MISS YOU. You were a crucial part of the success of this company over the past 2 years and were an awesome example to us all. Best of luck to you, Lisa and your great kids 1st Sgt. Just make sure you sign for those SAPI plates.

Weapons Company now finds itself back in Iraq, doing the things it does best. It will be quite a challenge for us, but we are all committed to excellence. You, all of the friends, families and supporters of the Key Volunteer Network, are a pertinent part of the success of our Company in achieving any mission we receive in the future. Thank you all for being there for us and we will continue to make you proud. Semper Fidelis.



T.R. POWLEDGE

April 8 --Capt. John Powledge hands out candy to children in Ubaydi, Iraq.
(Andrew Cutraro/P-D)

